

rock bottom by GhostGrantaire

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Summary:

Steve had been spiraling for a while. But this? Waking up at 1 PM on a Saturday with the worst hangover he'd ever experienced with a thirteen-year-old trying to help him?

This was rock bottom.

rock bottom

Author's Note:

So this series is going to be 12 parts, because After Laughter has been driving me crazy for season 2 Steve. Here's part one!

*All that I want is to wake up fine
Tell me that I'm alright, that I ain't gonna die
All that I want is a hole in ground
You can tell me when it's alright for me to come out*
-Hard Times by Paramore

Steve had been spiraling for awhile. He was aware of that-- it was kind of hard to ignore when he had physical proof in things like his grades and the bags under his eyes that had grown darker with every week. He wasn't sleeping well, couldn't see to get a good night's rest without downing at least a couple of drinks. He was skipping class constantly, for one stupid reason or another-- he didn't do his homework, he hadn't fixed his hair... the excuses never ending.

But this? Waking up at 1 PM on a Saturday with the worst hangover he'd ever experienced with a thirteen-year-old trying to help him?

This was rock bottom.

"Okay buddy, just... oh, okay." Dustin tried in vain to comfort him, patting him awkwardly on the back as he bent over the toilet yet again, closing his eyes tight as threw up. "Get it out."

"Fuck," he muttered, voice strained with lack of breath and pain. He pressed his forehead to his arm, trying to steady himself and push through the nausea still swirling in his stomach. "I'm dying."

"You're not dying, man," Dustin reassured him. Steve sighed and turned his head to the side. He was grateful he was already sitting because that small movement alone made his head spin. He fixed the

kid with a look, even though he knew he looked like utter shit.

“Why are you here?” He asked, words slurred slightly. He hadn’t asked many questions when Dustin had showed up in the bathroom, stunned by Steve’s state, but he figured it needed to be asked.

Dustin raised his eyebrows. “It’s Saturday. You were supposed to take me shopping for the dance, remember? You didn’t show up or pick up the phone, so I just came over.”

Steve groaned, both in pain and guilt. “Aw, shit.”

“It’s okay,” Dustin assured him. He got to his feet. “We’ll go tomorrow. For now... well, how do you cure hangovers?”

“I dunno,” Steve admitted. He frowned, narrowing his eyes at Dustin. “Why do you assume I’m hungover? I could just be sick.”

Dustin gave him a pitiful look. “You, uh, have beer spilled all over yourself right now. I could smell it from the hallway.”

Steve groaned again, but nausea took over yet again and he turned back to the toilet before he could reply. Dustin made a sound of pity, giving small “shh”s as he waited for Steve to finish. It weirdly helped.

“Kid, you don’t have to hang around,” Steve mumbled. “Especially since you don’t know what to do.”

“No, but I can find out. You’ve got a phone, don’t you?” Dustin asked, unconcerned.

“In the hallway,” Steve answered groggily. He leaned his head against the roll of toilet paper, grateful for how soft it was. It was like a tiny pillow, and Steve wondered if he could just fall asleep here.

“Okay, I’ll make a call. Be right back,” Dustin promised, hurrying out of the room.

After a second, Steve’s brain caught up with him. There weren’t many people Dustin knew to call about hangovers. That meant--

“You better not call Nancy about this!” Steve called out, even though

the loud volume made his head pound. He suddenly felt wide awake.

"I'm not!" Dustin called back, and Steve nodded in pure relief. He relaxed, leaning against the cool tile wall and letting his eyes drift shut.

"Hey, Will?" He heard Dustin say from the bathroom. Steve's eyes flew open. Oh fuck this was much worse than Nancy. "Yeah, hey, is your brother there?"

Steve shook his head, attempting to push himself to his feet. He got close before dizziness took over him and he fell against the wall painfully.

"Steve?" Dustin called suspiciously. "Just stay still!"

Steve didn't listen. He pushed himself off of the wall and stumbled to the bathroom door, pulling it open. There was no fucking way he was going to let Dustin get advice from his ex-girlfriend's current boyfriend about how to deal with his pathetic situation.

"Hey, Jonathan!" Dustin said into the phone. "So, quick question. How do you get rid of hangovers?"

Steve ground his teeth together, drawing the kid's attention.

"No, it's just, well Steve--" Dustin was staying, but he quickly stopped when he saw Steve, a look of frustration and slight fear coming over his face. "Hold on, Jonathan."

He pulled the phone away from his ear and fixed Steve with a look. "You're gonna end up throwing up in the hallway."

"No I'm not," Steve growled, grabbing the phone away from the boy. He glared at Dustin as he brought it up to his own ear and cleared his throat. "Jonathan?"

"Um, Steve?" Jonathan's voice rang out, nervous and uncomfortable. "Are you okay?"

"I'm great, Byers," Steve replied, closing his eyes to try and ease the tension in his head. "Dustin was just playing a prank, I'm actually

fantastic, so--”

He was cut off by his own stomach growling angrily and his throat contracting dangerously.

“Oh fuck,” he mumbled. He didn’t fight back when Dustin grabbed the phone away from him and let it dangle from the cord, pulling Steve back into the bathroom.

They barely made it to the toilet before Steve was vomiting yet again, the vile taste filling his mouth instantly. A few longer strands of hair fell into his face and he whimpered as he saw small specks of vomit clinging to them.

“Fucking disgusting,” he muttered, grabbed at a piece of toilet paper to attempt to clean up.

“I *told* you to stay in here,” Dustin reprimanded. “Just give me a minute, okay?”

This time, Steve didn’t argue as Dustin returned to the phone, picking it up from where he’d dropped it.

“Sorry about that, Jonathan. So, what were you saying?”

Steve listened pathetically as Dustin parroted back the instructions. “Lots of water, dry foods, okay, got it. Um... I don’t know, let me see-- STEVE! Do you have Ibuprofen?”

Steve gave a pathetic moan back, but Dustin understood.

“Yeah, got that. Ginger? Probably, I’ll look around. Anything else? Okay... okay, thanks Jonathan, you’re the best!”

Steve heard the sound of the phone clicking back on the line and he waited for the door to open again. He looked at Dustin as sternly as he could manage, but it didn’t seem to faze the younger boy.

“Do you still feel like throwing up?” Dustin asked. Steve sighed and shook his head, sitting up a bit straighter and flushing the toilet.

“Not right now,” he answered dutifully. Dustin nodded and turned to

the medicine cabinet, moving things aside as he looked around. "Whoa whoa, hold on Henderson--"

"Got it," Dustin said, grabbing a bottle of Advil and shoving it in his pocket. He turned to Steve. "Alright, breakfast time."

"Dustin, come on," Steve complained as Dustin helped him up. "I can take care of myself."

"Sorry to let you down, buddy, but you're actually pretty shit at that," Dustin countered. Steve wished he had an argument for that.

They made it down the stairs carefully. Steve was so dizzy he wondered if he was actually still drunk in some part of his mind. But Dustin didn't let him fall, despite his lesser height and weight.

His house was quiet, as Steve was used to. He didn't know where his parents were, but he didn't really care.

Dustin sat him down at the kitchen table, and Steve watched tiredly as he began rifling through the cabinets. He found a glass after a second and filled it up with tap water, setting it in front of Steve. Steve didn't move, watching with a wry expression as Dustin fished out a couple of Advil from his pocket before holding them out.

When Steve didn't reach for them, Dustin just raised his eyebrows. "Steve, come on! You have to rehydrate, and that headache isn't going away on it's own. Just trust me, okay?"

Steve heaved a sigh before grabbing the pills and popping them into his mouth, taking a slow swig of water. Dustin seemed satisfied because he turned around and immediately began rifling through Steve's pantry and fridge.

Steve didn't bother to try and stop him, instead resting his forehead against his palm and letting his eyes close. He still felt like shit, and had a feeling that time was the only thing that was going to change anything, but he appreciated the effort Dustin was giving. He just prayed that Jonathan wouldn't find it necessary to tell Nancy about today's phone call. Steve couldn't handle that level of embarrassment.

He must've drifted off, at least for a few minutes, because Dustin had

to shake him away, making his elbow slip off the table and hit the chair painfully.

“Come on, eat,” Dustin said, unconcerned with Steve’s injury.

Steve sighed, looking down at the food in front of him. Dustin had cut the two pieces of toast into triangles, and even sliced up a banana into smaller pieces. Steve sighed, glancing up at the kid’s grinning face from the other side of the table. He gave a small grimace and grabbed a piece of toast, biting in.

Rock bottom. Great. Just great.

Author's Note:

Since it's twelve parts, I'm hoping to stretch this out over twelve months following season 2. Please comment if you liked it!